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101ST CONGRESS
1st Session
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
REPORT
101-255

UNMARKED BURIAL OF CREMATED REMAINS IN ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY

SEPTEMBER 26, 1989.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

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Mr. MONTGOMERY, from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H.R. 88]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Veterans' Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 88) to direct the Secretary of the Army to set aside an appropriate area within Arlington National Cemetery for the unmarked burial of cremated remains, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon without amendment, by unanimous voice vote, and recommends that the bill do pass.

INTRODUCTION

On January 3, 1989, H.R. 88 was introduced by the Honorable Charles E. Bennett and referred to the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

On June 15, 1989, the Subcommittee on Housing and Memorial Affairs held a hearing on the bill, receiving testimony from the Honorable Charles E. Bennett; the Department of the Army; the Disabled American Veterans; the Paralyzed Veterans of America; the Non-Commissioned Officers Association; the Veterans of Foreign Wars; and Dr. William E. Phipps, Professor of Religion and Philosophy, Davis and Elkins College.

On September 12, 1989, the Subcommittee unanimously recommended H.R. 88 to the full Committee. On September 20, 1989, the full Committee ordered the bill reported to the House.

21-811⇆

H763-10

SUMMARY

H.R. 88 directs the Secretary of the Army to set aside an appropriate area, not suitable for the burial of casketed remains, within Arlington National Cemetery for the unmarked burial of cremated remains.

DISCUSSION OF THE BILL

Arlington National Cemetery currently has 205,000 veterans and eligible family members interred within an area of 572 acres developed for ground burials. An additional 40 acres is scheduled for development in the mid-1990's. This will add approximately 26,000 gravesites. Since eligibility for burial in Arlington is restricted, averaging about 3,000 annually, it is anticipated that space for ground burials will be available until 2021.

Columbariums accept the cremated remains of honorably discharged veterans, their spouses and eligible dependents. Currently, 8,400 niches are filled. If the average inurnments of 1,200 per year continue, the columbariums which are planned to ultimately accommodate 50,000 cremated remains will be filled between the years 2030 and 2040.

The reported bill would set aside an appropriate area within Arlington National Cemetery that could be used for the unmarked burial of cremated remains. This space would not eliminate any area in Arlington that has been designated for casketed remains.

OVERSIGHT FINDINGS

No oversight findings have been submitted to the Committee by the Committee on Government Operations.

BUDGET STATEMENT

The following letter was received from the Congressional Budget Office concerning the cost of the reported bill.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, D.C., Sept. 20, 1989.

Hon. G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery, *Chairman,*
House of Representatives,
Committee on Veterans Affairs,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has reviewed H.R. 88, a bill to direct the Secretary of the Army to set aside an appropriate area within Arlington National Cemetery for the unmarked burial of cremated remains, as ordered reported by the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, September 20, 1989. Based on this review, we would not expect the enactment of H.R. 88 to result in a significant increase in federal spending.

The language of the bill specifies that the area to be set aside should be one that is not suitable for the burial of casketed remains. Therefore the provision should have no effect on the normal burial operations at Arlington. Some cost would be involved in the burial of cremated remains, but it is expected that the number of

families requesting this option would be too small to generate a significant cost.

Sincerely,

ROBERT D. REISCHAUER,
Director.

INFLATIONARY IMPACT STATEMENT

The enactment of the reported bill would have no inflationary impact.

DEPARTMENT VIEWS

The following excerpts were taken from the testimony of the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, John S. Doyle, Jr. on the reported bill:

STATEMENT BY JOHN S. DOYLE, JR., PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY (CIVIL WORKS), BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND MEMORIAL AFFAIRS, COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS, JUNE 15, 1989

Dear Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, I am John S. Doyle, Jr., Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works. With me today is Mr. William F. Ostermeier, Deputy Superintendent of the Arlington National Cemetery. We appreciate the opportunity to appear before your subcommittee on behalf of the Secretary of the Army and testify on H.R. 88 and H.R. 537.

Arlington National Cemetery is this Nation's principal shrine to the men and women who served in the Armed Forces. It is a visible reflection of America's appreciation for those who have made the ultimate sacrifice to maintain our freedom. In addition to the thousands of funerals held there each year, hundreds of non-funeral ceremonies are conducted to honor those whose remains are interred or inurned within the cemetery. Thousands of visitors participate in these solemn events. During fiscal year 1989, approximately 1,900 ceremonies were conducted. President Reagan, Secretary of Defense Carlucci and 13 foreign heads of state or government participated in memorial services.

Arlington National Cemetery currently has 205,000 veterans and eligible family members interred within an area of 572 acres developed for ground burials. An additional 40 acres will be developed in the mid-1990's which will add approximately 26,000 gravesites. The number of burials per year has averaged 3,000 of which approximately 30 percent are widows, widowers or eligible dependents. Interments are made throughout the cemetery in a number of sections on a daily basis—thus allowing simultaneous conduct of graveside services. Space for ground burials is projected to be available until 2021.

In addition to ground burials, two columbariums have been constructed to accept the cremated remains of honorably discharged veterans, their spouses and eligible dependents. The columbariums each contain 5,000 niches. An average of 1,200 are inurned in the columbarium each year. To date, 8,400 of the 10,000 niches have been used, and it is projected that the columbarium will be at ca-

pacity by June 1990. By the end of May 1990, two additional columbariums will be opened with space for 10,000 niches. Overall planning and programming in the out years will allow for construction of columbariums resulting in a total capacity of 50,000 niches. If the average inurnments of 1,200 per year continue, the columbariums will be filled between the years 2030 and 2040.

The bill, H.R. 88 would direct the Secretary of the Army to set aside an appropriate area, not suitable for the burial of casketed remains, within Arlington National Cemetery for the unmarked burial of cremated remains. The Department of the Army supports enactment of the legislation. We believe the number of individuals who would choose this mode of interment would be quite small. However, as the cemetery nears its capacity there may be a greater acceptance of this interment procedure. The names of those who choose this method will be recorded on a plaque. The area will be simply marked and will result in minimal additional costs.

Arlington National Cemetery has identified an appropriate site within the cemetery that could be used for the burial of cremated remains. The site is located in an area acceptable for cremated remains but is not acceptable for ground interments.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW MADE BY THE BILL, AS REPORTED

In compliance with clause 3 of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, changes in existing law made by the bill, H.R. 88 as reported, are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets, new matter is printed in italic, existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE

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PART II—GENERAL BENEFITS

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CHAPTER 24—NATIONAL CEMETERIES AND MEMORIALS

Sec.

1000. Establishment of National Cemetery System; composition of such system; appointment of director.
1001. Advisory Committee on Cemeteries and Memorials.
1002. Persons eligible for interment in national cemeteries.
1003. Memorial areas.
1004. Administration.
1005. Disposition of inactive cemeteries.
1006. Acquisition of lands.
1007. Authority to accept and maintain suitable memorials.
1008. Aid to States for establishment, expansion, and improvement of veterans' cemeteries.
1009. Memorial areas in Arlington National Cemetery.
1010. Burial of cremated remains in Arlington National Cemetery.

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§ 1010. Burial of cremated remains in Arlington National Cemetery

The Secretary of the Army shall designate an area of appropriate size within Arlington National Cemetery, not suitable for the burial of casketed remains, for the unmarked interment of the ashes of persons eligible for interment in Arlington National Cemetery whose remains were cremated, in accordance with such regulations as the Secretary may prescribe.

(b) The Secretary of the military departments shall make available appropriate forms on which those members of the Armed Forces who so desire may indicate their desire to be buried within the area to be designated under subsection (a).

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